

What is Conflict Coaching?

At some point in our careers, most of us will encounter challenging situations that require specific skills to navigate conflict effectively. Conflict in the workplace can arise at any level—from employee to manager, executive, or board—and when it is prolonged or unresolved, it can have a significant impact on both individuals and organisations.

Conflict coaching is a confidential, one-to-one process in which the client and coach work together to develop more constructive ways of communicating and managing difficult issues. It can help clients gain insight into a specific situation, build workplace communication capability, and manage conflict at any stage of the conflict cycle—whether to prevent escalation, respond to an ongoing issue, support participation in a grievance process, or maximise the benefits of mediation or a facilitated conversation.

Conflict Coaching aims to:

- Build deeper insight and reflective capacity in interpersonal relationships
- Create clarity about the conflict situation
- Challenge unhelpful or negative narratives
- Develop understanding of the other person's perspective
- Explore and develop options for resolution
- Identify triggers and strengthen self-regulation skills
- Refresh or build confidence and capability in conflict management
- Establish SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound

The Coach's Role is to:

- Recognise and support the client's capacity to manage their situation
- Help the client identify goals for change
- Assist the client to define practical steps toward those goals
- Identify barriers that may affect progress
- Work collaboratively with the client toward constructive outcomes
- Provide support, focus and accountability throughout the process

Conflict Coaching can be useful:

- When an individual needs support to manage challenging workplace interactions
- Before or after a formal HR or grievance process
- As an alternative to a formal conflict management or resolution process
- When someone is participating in mediation and would benefit from additional skills to manage the process and future challenges effectively
- When an organisation is undergoing significant change or operating under pressure
- As a professional development opportunity for managers and leaders

Conflict coaches do not direct or advise clients on substantive outcomes. Instead, they support clients to make informed choices for themselves.

What is Conflict Coaching?

What is the process?

Conflict coaching generally includes three individual sessions of 60-90 minutes. These sessions are structured to help clients reflect on the issues they are facing, identify clear goals for change, and determine practical next steps.

If, during intake or the first session, it becomes clear that conflict coaching is not the right fit for the situation or the individual, the client may be referred to a more appropriate service, such as EAP counselling or a facilitated conversation.

A conflict coach helps clients develop the 5 Cs:

- **CLARITY:** gain a clearer understanding of the conflict situation.
- **COMPREHENSION:** understand their own needs and goals, as well as those of others.
- **CHOICES:** identify and evaluate options for moving forward.
- **CONFIDENCE:** build confidence in managing conflict and achieving their goals.
- **COMPETENCE:** strengthen conflict management skills to engage constructively in the situation.

Additional sessions may be arranged where there is a clear benefit to the client, subject to prior approval.

Intake Sessions

Referrer (30min)

The referrer provides background on the matter and outlines organisational expectations. The coach explains the coaching process, including client confidentiality.

Client (60 min)

The coach explains the process and obtains a brief overview of the client's situation. The client is invited to outline their goals for coaching and what they hope to gain from it. Together, the client and coach assess whether coaching is the right fit.

Coaching Sessions

Session One:

The first session focuses on establishing specific, measurable goals and understanding the client's account of what has occurred. A significant part of the session is often devoted to exploring the client's experience and the impact the situation has had on them. Where appropriate, the perspectives of other parties may also start to be considered. Each session ends with a brief reflection on insights gained.

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Session Two:

The second session reviews the client's goals and explores what has changed since the first session. It often focuses on examining other perspectives, clarifying the client's preferred future, and identifying practical action steps to move toward that outcome.

Session Three:

In the final session, the client's goals and any developments are reviewed against their preferred future and planned action steps. The session may also explore effective strategies for a range of scenarios, such as managing a challenging relationship or work situation, or preparing for mediation where appropriate.

**Additional sessions may be sought by the Conflict Coach if this will benefit the client.*

Outcomes Summary

At the conclusion of coaching, both the client and the referrer receive a brief outcomes summary covering attendance and any agreed next steps, such as a mediation or facilitated conversation intake where relevant.

Because coaching is confidential, the outcomes summary does not include detailed session content. Protecting client confidentiality and trust is a high priority. To support sustainable outcomes and ensure alignment with organisational expectations, Positive Solutions encourages the client and referrer to discuss the client's learning directly.

Preparing for coaching sessions

Referrers are strongly encouraged to clearly outline organisational expectations to the client before intake, and to ensure the client has a copy of this fact sheet and the coaching contract.

*If you would like some more information or want to engage with Conflict Coaching
contact us to make an appointment:*

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